



EAST CUMBRIA FAMILY SUPPORT ASSOCIATION

VOLUNTEERS' ROLE

Title	Family Support Volunteer
Purpose	To reduce the stress and increase the pleasure of caring for young children. East Cumbria Family Support Association provides a befriending scheme offering support and practical assistance to families in their own homes through the work of volunteers and staff. The Association also provides support through a variety of groups for both parents and children. Volunteers assist staff with the delivery of these activities.
Skills, experience and qualities	No formal qualification is needed but we will require a broad life experience and some experience of living or working with children. The ability to listen with understanding, maintain confidentiality and deal with families in a non-judgemental, non-discriminatory manner is also required.
Activities could include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting a parent with parenting skills.• Helping a parent to play with his/her children• Providing support with budgeting and encouraging access to other community services.• Advice and assistance with practical household skills. Volunteers are not matched with families specifically to do housework.• Helping the development of 'life skills' such as social interaction, self-advocacy, and hygiene.• Encouraging recognition of the pleasure that children can give.• Respite care given within parameters. This does not include childminding to enable a parent to work.• Assisting families to attend important appointments, eg speech therapy.• Befriending support and non-judgemental listening.

Support	Support and supervision will be provided by a designated Family Support Coordinator.
Training	All volunteers will be expected to attend an initial course of training. Additional training will be available on a regular basis.
Time commitment	Variable, depending on the needs of the individual family, and the agreed availability of the volunteer. Volunteers usually visit their allocated family on a weekly basis at a mutually convenient time which could include evenings or weekends. We hope that volunteers will stay with the Association for at least a year following their training.
Location	Volunteers are usually matched with a family no more than 10 miles from their home. This distance may be increased in rural areas due to availability of volunteers and the need to maintain confidentiality both of the volunteer and the family. Groups are delivered in a variety of venues across our targeted geographical area.
Benefits	Volunteers will gain experience of working with children and families, have access to a range of training opportunities, learn new skills and be reimbursed for expenses incurred.